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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with the President of Russia (S)

PARTICIPANTS: President Putin

Interpreter: Peter Afanasenko

Notetakers: Brian Sollom, Jo-Ann Burdian,
and Julie Brotherton

DATE, TIME: October 9, 2006, 7:52 - 8:04 a.m. EDT

AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Vladimir, how are you? (U)

President Putin: So, the problem is that the Koreans are upsetting us. (U)

The President: Let me tell you three things on my mind. One, happy birthday. You're getting to be an old man, but not as old as me. (U)

President Putin: Thank you very much. So I see that you are in a good mood. (U)

The President: I would say my mood is mixed. Before I talk about North Korea, I want to talk about the recent death of the reporter and would hope very much that you take a personal interest in solving this. (S)

President Putin: So, this is a terrible tragedy first of all on the personal level. And of course this is a political blow against Russia because it gets us back to the freedom of the press and security of the press and journalists, and those that did this were well aware of that. Recently she was really engaged in the topic of Chechnya and this throws a shadow over the leadership of Chechnya and we are well aware of that. Actually, this assassination does more damage than the reports

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she made. We haven't forgotten about the assassination of American journalist Paul Klebnikov, and we will do everything possible to solve this case and finish the investigation and the prosecution of the other. (S)

The President: Thank you. It's very important as you know. Listen, the other issue is North Korea of course. He ignored the warnings of the world, but primarily of Japan, China, and South Korea, who sent him very clear messages. It is important that we send a very strong message primarily through the United Nations Security Council, primarily through a chapter 7 resolution, that their behavior is unacceptable. And that's what I'm calling about, just to make sure we've spoken and that Condi and Lavrov and Hadley and Ivanov stay close. I will have spoken by the end of the morning to China, Japan and South Korea. We don't want to emotionalize the issue. We don't want to issue statements that are provocative. We will be strong in our statement and measured in our resolve and that's why I am calling. (S)

President Putin: Actually, I saw your statement and your interviews in TV related to the Korean issue. I believe what is being done is according to the scope of the problem. I remember in your interview with Larry King, you told him you would act persistently in a calm and quiet manner. Three hours ago in a session with a governor, I said publicly that Russia condemns North Korea's test. The explosion was just 200 kilometers from our border. We are concerned for two reasons: first of all, this is a security issue for Russia. I repeat, it was only 200 kilometers off our border. I will have to closely monitor the environmental situation. Of course, it inflicts damage on the nuclear non-proliferation regime. So, it incites other nuclear-threshold countries to move closer to this eventually, and it also makes worse the problem of Iran. (S)

The President: That's right. (U)

President Putin: We are prepared to work closely with the U.S. and other states in the U.N. Security Council to resolve the situation. But, I agree with you that we should act without hysterics and in a balanced way. (S)

The President: We are on the same page. That is important. (S)

President Putin: It looks that way. (U)

The President: I hope you are doing okay. (U)

President Putin: Yes, everything is alright. I know you will be flying to APEC and will make a technical stopover in Moscow. (U)

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The President: Thank you very much. (U)

President Putin: We'll make sure you are comfortable on Russian land, so it will be comfortable even for a couple of minutes. (U)

The President: Well, you're very kind. It helps with the logistics. That is a kind gesture and I appreciate it. (U)

President Putin: So, we'll prepare caviar and coke. (U)

The President: And belinis. Thank you. If we don't talk before then, I'll see you in Vietnam. (U)

President Putin: Thank you very much for the call. (U)

The President: Alright Valdimir, thanks. (U)

President Putin: Bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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